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MINI INCARNATION DOUBLES AS MAIN OR STARTER PAGE 22

Rookie NDP MPs stepping up again

All but two of the young MPs elected in the 'Orange Crush' sweep of 2011 will run again in 2015 PAGE 6

$1.3B boost for Ontario from feds

Extra cash from Ottawa for health, social services and equalization payments PAGE 3

WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER

Ten-week-old Jaxson Schieman curls up for a nap and photo shoot with Santa at the Rideau Centre in Ottawa, Sunday. With just 10 days until Christmas there's no time to snooze on getting ready. Metro spoke to harried shoppers and got their tips on keeping your cool while shopping at Yule. See story, page 3. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

Police eyeing night vision

Wish list. Ottawa police chief asking to spend $196K on new goggles

JOE LOFARO
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The Ottawa Police Service wants to buy more than a dozen night vision goggles for its tactical unit at a cost of nearly $200,000.

On Monday, police chief Charles Bordeleau will ask the Ottawa Police Services Board to approve the purchase of 15 NVD-BNVD P+ night vision goggles and helmet mounts, and training from Ottawa-based distributor Millbrook Tactical.

Everything will cost $196,167, excluding taxes.

Bordeleau noted in a report the goggles and training are an "important capability" for incident commanders to use in operations that are in low or no light where public and officer safety is at risk.

"The ability to use night vision is a proven technology that would benefit the unit's capabilities, enhance operational effectiveness, increase public and officer safety and allow the unit to be more interoperable with our federal and provincial partners," the report said.

The new, hands-free binocular goggles would update the OPS inventory of older model, monocular hand-held devices.

The older goggles limit the officer's ability to interact with suspects when responding to an incident, according to the report.

The report said Ottawa police took a year to research multiple technologies from different providers, but chose NVD-BNVD based on feedback from the RCMP Emergency Response Team, the OPP Tactics and Rescue Unit, and the Canadian Special Forces Command.

If approved, the purchase would leave a remaining balance of just over $171,000 in the police's equipment budget envelope and the devices would be rolled out in the second quarter of 2015.

The request is bundled in the board's Monday meeting, which also seeks to approve a 1.75 per cent tax increase included in the 2015 draft budget.

The city's draft budget will be tabled on Feb. 4.

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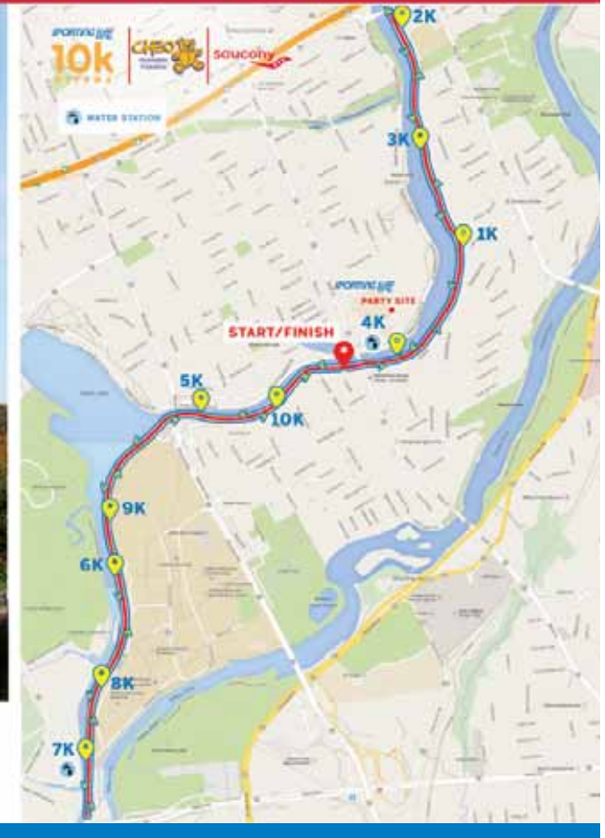

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How to avert a shopping freak-out

Rideau Centre. The countdown is on for holiday gift buyers

LUCY SCHOLEY
lucy.scholey@metronews.ca

The Rideau Centre gets busy in the lead-up to Christmas Sunday. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

Don't despair, last-minute Christmas shoppers: You still have more than a week left until your Dec. 24 gift-buying day.

But the headache is already building at the Rideau Centre, with shoppers bustling through the stores, retailers trying to keep stocking the shelves and the perpetually long line to meet Santa.

Metro asked a few shoppers for their tips on buying gifts in the lead-up to Christmas.

Budget well

Jeff Dyer did not have any shopping bags on him at the Rideau Centre on Sunday afternoon.

Despite finishing his Christmas shopping earlier than usual this year, he braved the mall to accompany others on their gift-buying.

"Usually I'm a last-minute shopper, but I'm already done this year," he said. "This year, I just got on the ball and got it done a bit early."

His tip: "Budget. Don't put it on your credit card."

Shop online

Marc Chénier, of Trois-Rivières, is almost finished his Christmas shopping. That is, he will be finished when the gifts he already bought online arrive.

"I don't have time to Christmas shop anyway," said Chénier, who was visiting his daughter.

"I guess I'm in the 80 per cent of all the men waiting for the last-minute anyways," he said with a laugh.

If you must hit the mall, pick the best time.

With their long list of gifts to buy, Ashley Rosa and Graeme Kehoe were getting their errands done before the stores get even busier.

"Avoid shopping on the weekend because the mall is really busy," said Rosa.

Donate to a charity instead

Apart from buying small stocking stuffers, Jaimie Broughton said she will put gift money toward donating to charities instead.

"I think it's easy to fall into that trap of feeling like you have to spend a lot of money," she said. "I think the most important thing is to just concentrate on spending time with your friends and family over Christmas."

Conservatives doling out extra $1.3B to Ontario

Ontario Minister of Finance Charles Sousa TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ontario is getting $1.3 billion in extra cash from Ottawa next year, a boost that helps take the sting out of the $640 million in transfer payments the province says it was deprived of in 2014, Torstar News Service has learned.

Canada's most populous province will get $20.4 billion from Ottawa for health, social services and equalization payments in 2015, up from $19.2 billion in the past year.

Equalization payments to Ontario will rise to $2.4 billion, up $375 million or 18 per cent over the previous year. That's the biggest increase of any of the provinces or territories.

The payment also earmarks $13 billion for health in Ontario, up $735 million; and $4.9 billion for social programs, up $149 million, according to figures obtained by Torstar.

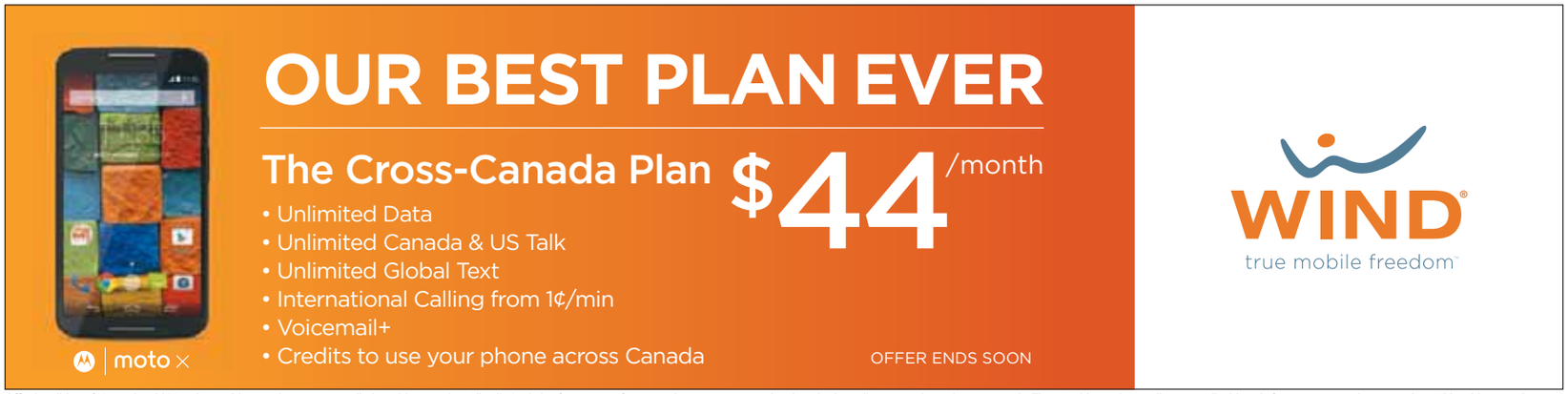
The numbers will be part of the day-long discussion Monday when federal Finance Minister Joe Oliver meets in Ottawa with his provincial counterparts, including Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa.

Equalization payments, which are meant to guarantee that all provinces can offer an equivalent level of services, and federal transfers for health and social programs are paid out to the provinces based on complex formulas as well as population.

Queen's Park has been in a bitter dispute after the federal government a year ago eliminated a provision meant to protect provinces from seeing transfers drop in any one year.

Ontario says that move cost it $640 million in 2014, when its transfer payments dropped to $19.2 billion from $19.8 billion in 2013-14.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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Somerset St. Suspect in hammer attack in custody

An Ottawa man who allegedly attacked a victim with a hammer is now in custody.

Jeffrey Weber, 31, faces charges of aggravated assault and possession of dangerous weapons following the attack outside 380 Somerset on Dec. 9. He made his first court appearance by video remand on Saturday.

Police say the random attack left the 53-year-old victim with severe facial and head injuries. He was still in hospital recovering when police sent out the release on Friday night.

The attacker also carried a large kitchen knife in a plastic bag.

Police released this photo asking for help identifying the man. POLICE HANDOUT

Anyone with more information can call Ottawa police's Central District Investigative Section at 613-236-1222, ext. 5166. Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 613-233-8477(TIPS), toll-free at 1-800-222-8477 or by downloading the Ottawa police app.

LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

Serious collision

Man charged with impaired driving, fleeing scene

Police charged a man with impaired driving after he allegedly fled the scene of a serious collision Friday evening that sent a 43-year-old woman to hospital in critical condition.

Patrol officers arrested the man after chasing him with the assistance of a K-9 unit. The collision occurred at the intersection of Heron Road and Riverside Drive just before midnight after a pickup truck struck a passenger vehicle, according to police.

Police charged Kyle Senk, 25, with impaired operation of motor vehicle causing bodily harm, driving with a blood-alcohol level exceeding 0.8 milligrams, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, and failing to remain at the scene of a collision.

JOE LOFARO/METRO

Recent shootings

Police find loaded handgun during west-end patrol

Police have charged two men with firearm offences after finding a loaded .45-calibre weapon during a traffic stop in the city's west end Thursday.

Police were patrolling the area of Ramsay Crest and Dumaurier Avenue around 10:50 p.m. in response to recent shootings in the area — three in as many weeks. They arrested Michel Aurelus-Marmonte, 21, and charged him with eight weapons offences and breach of probation. They also arrested Christopher Exume, 23, who was charged with possession of an undisclosed amount of marijuana.

The Guns and Gang Unit is continuing to investigate the west-end shootings, which appear to be linked to gang turf wars. TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

Ottawa photographer Caroline Leal photographs landscape near Thingvallavatn, Iceland, during a trip in February 2014. COURTESY CAROLINE LEAL

Blogger opens shutter on clean water project

Photographers Without Borders. Ottawa woman to document non-profit initiative in Nicaragua

JOE LOFARO
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An Ottawa travel blogger and photographer is crossing off another country on her checklist after being selected to document a clean water initiative in rural Nicaragua, free of charge.

Caroline Leal is heading off Jan. 7 with Photographers Without Borders (PWB) to travel across the Central American country for two weeks and will donate her time and photos of volunteers from El Porvenir, a non-profit organization that helps build wells and promotes hygiene education.

Her work will be featured in PWB exhibits and magazines for promotional purposes, said Leal.

The 28-year-old's chronic travel bug started after an "obligatory existential crisis of my 20s" when she started teaching English in Turkey.

Then in 2012, she went on a year-long backpacking excursion with her boyfriend across 12 countries, which started in France and ended in Thailand.

"That was just a lifelong dream we had," she said.

The couple writes for the travel blog Passport and A Toothbrush.

Taking showers with buckets of cold water in Khao Sok, Thailand, opened her eyes to the plight of poverty-stricken people in developing countries who have limited access to water.

"This was brand new to me, so I was … more conscious of what I was using. It just made me realize I can actually use a little less and be more conscious of it," she said.

Being chosen to document El Porvenir's work will be a "humbling" experience, she said.

She said she hopes her photography skills will evoke the same kind of emotion readers felt when seeing photographs of children in front of destroyed homes that were caught in the crossfire during the Israel-Palestine conflict last summer, for example.

"I think photography is an absolutely an essential tool to (storytelling)," said Leal.

"It's essential in the sense that we're storytelling and it's essential in the fact that we're helping them being able to market their charity."

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Salvation Army needs more toys

The Salvation Army in Ottawa is expecting to provide 16,000 kids with Christmas gifts this year and keeping up with that demand will be challenging for the faith-based social organization.

The Salvation Army is calling on Ottawa residents to donate new and unwrapped toys for boys and girls between eight and 10 years old.

Ideal gifts for eight- to 10-year-olds include puzzles, board games, electronic learning devices, arts and crafts, sports equipment and dress-up items.

Volunteers sort toys at the Salvation Army's toy drive depot. SEAN MCKIBBON/METRO

The Salvation Army is hoping to yield gifts such as makeup, brand-name bags and backpacks, boys' cologne and cellphone accessories for 10- to 12-year-old kids.

Donations can be dropped off at CTV Bell Media at 87 George St., Carlingwood Mall, St. Laurent Shopping Centre, Walmart in Barrhaven, Kanata and Orleans, The National Art Centre, Great Hobbies on Train Yard Drive, all TD Canada Trust locations and the Toy Mountain warehouse at 361 Queen St.

For more information on how to donate go to www.ottawaboothcentre.org.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

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From left: newly elected New Democratic Party MPs Matthew Dubé, Laurin Liu, Mylène Freeman and Charmaine Borg, all McGill University students, arrive to join other newly elected members of Parliament taking part in an orientation session on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on May 19, 2011. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Many rookie MPs to run in 2015 election

'Big responsibility'. All but two young NDP MPs have committed to running for re-election

In 2011, Mylène Freeman became a New Democrat member of Parliament almost by accident. In 2015, she intends to be elected on purpose.

Freeman, 25, is one of a half-dozen MPs who were barely in their 20s when a surge of support for the NDP in Quebec saw them get the job in 2011, despite never having set foot in their ridings during the campaign.

Questions swirled about whether this rookie class would last even a single sitting. Not only did they prevail, but so far all but two have committed to running for re-election in 2015.

Only 19 when he was elected, NDP MP Pierre-Luc Dusseault had the distinction of becoming the youngest person ever voted into the House of Commons. He didn't say much for the first little while but slowly found his voice.

"You have such big responsibility, and if you want to succeed you have to work, work hard, work every day," Dusseault said.

It's not just Freeman and Dusseault going into 2015 a little wiser.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau suspended MPs Massimo Pacetti and Scott Andrews from caucus last month amid explosive allegations of "serious personal misconduct" involving two of their NDP counterparts.

Though whispers of impropriety have coursed through the halls of power in Ottawa for decades, the suspension forced Parliament to confront it publicly for the first time and examine how ill-equipped it is to deal with the interpersonal realities of a modern workplace.

Creating a better political climate for women is one of the reasons Freeman says she wants to run again.

"This place isn't built for women," Freeman said. Ironically — and unbeknownst to her — a male colleague from another party could be seen taking note of her physique as he passed behind her while she spoke. A harassment-prevention policy was implemented this past week.

Parliament also learned it was not immune from security threats. Cpl. Nathan Cirillo was shot dead Oct. 22 at the National War Memorial, moments before gunman Michael Zehaf Bibeau stormed the Centre Block, where he died in a gun battle with security.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It's a different life than others who are my age, who are 23, still in university."

NDP MP Pierre-Luc Dusseault, who was 19 years old when elected to Parliament

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North's hunger pangs persist as issue gains 'momentum'

The lineup for Iqaluit's soup kitchen stretches out the door, down a flight of wooden steps and onto the icy street. Dozens of people wait patiently in -40 C cold, braced against the gusting shards of wind.

Inside, Cathy Sawer stirs an industrial-sized pot brimming with chicken soup, enough for 200 servings. The 65-year-old and her fellow volunteers have been in the kitchen since 8 a.m., preparing a lunch that will be the only meal of the day for many of those waiting outside.

Nunavut's long-standing struggle with high food prices and widespread hunger has prompted scrutiny of late for both the federal and territorial governments. In the wake of a November report from the federal auditor general critiquing the government's food-subsidy program, footage emerged of Rankin Inlet residents foraging in the town dump.

Nunavut MP and Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq insists hunger in the North has been exaggerated. But there's a sense in Nunavut that with fresh attention on an old problem, things may finally change — albeit slowly.

"We have some momentum on this issue," said Ed McKenna, director of Nunavut's Anti-Poverty Secretariat. "But it's going to take time to see that translated to concrete work."

Food insecurity — defined as a lack of access to healthy, affordable food — is not a new phenomenon in Nunavut. Even the traditional Inuit diet of caribou, fish, birds, whales, seal and berries left people vulnerable to hunger pangs if they couldn't find any plants or wild animals to eat. But the problem is as persistent as ever.

"I grew up hungry but not starving," said Leesee Papatsie, who helped organize Nunavut-wide food-price protests.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We used to go garbage-picking. We knew which houses had food. That was the main thing. We knew which houses had food."

Leesee Papatsie, who helped organize Nunavut-wide food-price protests

Ridge to Greenland

Danes to stake claim to North Pole

Denmark says scientific data shows Greenland's continental shelf is connected to a ridge beneath the Arctic Ocean, giving Danes a claim to the North Pole and any potential energy resources beneath it.

Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard says Denmark will deliver a claim on Monday to a United Nations panel in New York that will eventually decide control of the area, for which Russia and Canada are also competing.

Lidegaard said he hopes the other nations that have made claims in the Arctic will continue to keep to "the rules of the game."

The United States, Russia, Norway, Canada and Denmark all have areas surrounding the North Pole, but only Canada and Russia have indicated an interest in it before Denmark's claim.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Vice-president of Health Quality Ontario, Dr. Irfan Dhalla, is seen in this undated handout photo. Dramatic improvements are needed to provide quality palliative care for all patients facing the end of their lives, including boosting the number of health providers trained in specialized care of the dying, says an Ontario health advisory agency.
HANDOUT/ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

End-of-life care needs to be improved: Agency

Health Quality Ontario. A report shows 70 per cent of palliative care patients prefer comfort over life-prolonging efforts

Dramatic improvements are needed to provide quality palliative care for all patients facing the end of their lives, including boosting the number of health providers trained in specialized care of the dying, says an Ontario health advisory agency.

Yet the issue is becoming more pressing due to an aging population: by 2026, the number of Canadians dying each year will increase by 40 per cent to 330,000 people, with each death affecting the well-being of five other people on average or more than 1.6 million people in all, the report says.

"There certainly are some real pockets of excellence," Dr. Irfan Dhalla, vice-president of Health Quality Ontario, said of the availability of comprehensive palliative care.

"But there are also areas in Ontario where patients don't have access to that kind of care, and the best estimates are that only about 30 per cent of people who are dying have access to specialized team-based palliative care," said Dhalla.

In a report released Monday, Health Quality Ontario said that although Canada ranks relatively high on an international index measuring "quality of death," hundreds of thousands of Canadians have no access to co-ordinated end-of-life care.

Polls have shown that most Canadians want to die at home, surrounded by their loved ones. But most people end up dying in hospital, he said, resulting in some patients not getting the care they would like to have.

For instance, the report cites a survey which found 70 per cent of hospitalized elderly patients wanted comfort measures instead of life-prolonging treatment. However, more than half were admitted to intensive care units.

"Patient choice and preferences are essential to the delivery of high-quality care," said Dr. Joshua Tepper, president and CEO of Health Quality Ontario and a family physician who treats patients at all stages, including as they near the end of their lives.

"In order to guarantee the best care for patients, it is necessary to recognize that death is an intensely personal experience which must be guided through discussions in advance with medical professionals and loved ones."

The report also provides evidence to support the need for public discussion about the normalization and de-medicalization of death and dying.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Foreign workers killed in weekend crash

Two involved in a fatal highway crash in Alberta Saturday were newly married, said members of the Filipino community.

Three people were killed in the collision on Highway 11 and Range Road 4-2 Saturday after a Ford Mustang hit the ditch and then overcompensated, colliding with a moving truck driving in the next lane.

Two male passengers and one female passenger were declared dead on scene, while the male driver was transported to the University of Alberta Hospital and is in critical condition.

RCMP has confirmed the victims of the crash were temporary foreign workers returning to Rocky Mountain House after language training in Red Deer and believe that driver inexperience could have been a factor in the crash.

According to long-time member of the Edmonton Filipino Lyla Gray, two of the crash victims had worked at Dairy Queen and were married just two months ago, with the groom only arriving in Canada before the wedding.

"I was so shocked and all of the Filipinos are shocked also. It happened again after two weeks," said Gray.

Last month, four people — also temporary foreign workers from the Philippines — were killed while driving on Highway 21 near Leduc.

"(We're) sad because I don't know why it's happening in Alberta," Gray said, adding that there needs to be more education for newcomers to Canada about winter driving.

"In the Philippines where we come from there's no snow so it's very hard to adjust when (we) come here," she said.

Gray said she often warns people not to drive in the winter due to unsafe conditions.

At the time of the crash, all of the victims had been sending their earnings home to relatives in the Philippines.

LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO IN EDMONTON

Nicaragua

18 missing from capsized boat

Rescue crews in Nicaragua say they have found a fishing boat that capsized in the Caribbean last week with 50 people aboard.

Eighteen fishermen who were aboard the lobster boat MN WaywardWind remain missing. It overturned about 35 nautical miles (65 kilometres) southeast of Puerto Cabezas.

Vilma Garcia, the wife of one of eight men rescued Friday, said her husband Porfilio Levy, 36, suffered dehydration and severe sunburn and died a day later. The boat was on a 15-day trip when it was hit by a huge wave Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China

Ten miners killed in explosion

Ten Chinese miners were found dead Sunday hours after they were trapped underground in an explosion at a mine in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, state media said.

The cause of the incident at the Xingyun Mine in the city of Jixi was under investigation, the state-run China News Service said.

China's mines are the world's deadliest, although a push to boost safety has lowered death tolls in accidents. Just over 1,000 deaths in 604 coal mining accidents were reported in 2013, down from more than 6,000 per year a decade ago. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congo

Boat death toll could exceed 129

Authorities say at least 129 people are dead in Congo after a boat sank on a lake in southeastern Congo.

Laurent Kahozi Sumba, the transport minister for Katanga province, said Sunday 129 bodies have been recovered and there are 232 known survivors.

Many boats in Congo carry far more people and cargo than are listed. The disaster is believed to have happened early Friday.

The MV Mutambala was a private boat that connected towns in Katanga and South Kivu provinces. Kahozi said an investigation is underway.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Compromise deal reached on climate

Watered down. Rich, poorer countries disagree on who should do what to fight global warming

Quoted

"The text went from weak to weaker to weakest and it's very weak indeed."

Sam Smith, chief of climate policy for the environmental group WWF, on the agreement.

Climate negotiators salvaged a compromise deal in Lima early Sunday that sets the stage for a global pact in Paris next year, but rejected a rigorous review of the greenhouse gas emissions limits they plan.

More than 30 hours behind schedule, delegates from more than 190 countries agreed on what information should go into the pledges that countries submit for the expected Paris pact.

They argued all day Saturday over the wording of the decision, with developing nations worried that the text blurred the distinction between what rich and poor countries can be expected to do.

The final draft said countries have "common but differentiated responsibilities" to deal with global warming.

The momentum from last month's joint U.S.-China deal on emissions targets faded quickly in Lima as rifts reopened over who should do what to fight global warming.

The approved draft weakened language on the content of the pledges, saying they "may" instead of "shall" include quantifiable information showing how countries intend to meet their emissions targets.

"I think it's definitely watered down from what we expected," said Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Protest over shootings moves to church pews

Senior Judge Theodore Newman, of the Historic Courthouse, wearing a "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" shirt, raises his clenched fist during a church service at the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington Sunday. Congregants in African-American churches across the U.S. wore black to Sunday services in a symbolic stand against police shootings of unarmed black men.

MANUEL BALCE CENETA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hostage-taking likely in Sydney shop

An apparent hostage situation was unfolding inside a chocolate shop and cafe in Australia's largest city on Monday, where several people could be seen through a window with their hands held in the air.

New South Wales state police said they were dealing with "an armed incident," though they would not confirm hostages were being held inside the Lindt Chocolat Cafe in Sydney. But television footage shot through the cafe's windows showed several people with their arms in the air and hands pressed against the glass.

"Specialist officers are attempting to make contact (with) those inside a cafe," police said in a statement.

TV footage showed two people inside the cafe holding up what appeared to be a black flag with white Arabic writing on it.

Zain Ali, the head of the Islamic Studies Research Unit at the University of Auckland, said it was difficult to read the message. But he believed it was the Shahada, or declaration of faith. He said he could make out the word "Muhammad."

Ali said the Shahada translates as "There is no deity of worship except God (Allah), and Muhammad is the messenger of God." It is considered the first pillar of Islam's five pillars of faith, and has been used by groups like al-Qaida and Islamic State, Ali said.

A police spokeswoman said no injuries had been reported from the incident. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At least 32 dead, 76 missing in Indonesian landslide

Rescuers try to pull out the body of a landslide victim in Jemblung, Central Java, Indonesia, on Sunday. A.K. HENDRATMO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescuers pulled more bodies from the debris Sunday after heavy rain in central Indonesia loosened soil and collapsed a hill, setting off a landslide that killed at least 32 villagers and left 76 others missing under piles of mud.

About 2,000 rescuers, including soldiers, police and volunteers, were digging through the mud and the wreckage of crumpled homes, getting some relief from clear weather following days of heavy rain. Excavators, meanwhile, shoved aside earth and the remains of decimated wooden homes.

Residents of Jemblung village in Central Java province's Banjarnegara district said they heard a roaring sound followed by the raining down of red soil that buried more than 100 houses late Friday.

"The landslide looked like it was spinning down," said one resident, Subroto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name.

He said one side of the hill collapsed, then another. "In five minutes, there were three (major landslides) and they swept away everything," Subroto said.

By late afternoon Sunday, 32 bodies had been pulled from the debris, while hopes faded that the 76 people still missing would be found alive, said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, the spokesman for Indonesia's Disaster Mitigation Agency.

Banjarnegara is located on Indonesia's most densely populated island of Java, about 460 kilometres (285 miles) east of Jakarta.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hill collapse

Villager Wayan Wahyuni, a 20-year-old farmer, saw his grandfather and dozens of neighbours buried alive.

- **The mud was more than six metres deep in some spots.**
- **Wahyuni himself was buried up to his chest until he was rescued seven hours later.**

Waze. Quest to outsmart traffic app fails miserably

Los Angeles residents whose homes hug a warren of streets next to the busiest urban freeway in the U.S. were baffled when they saw bumper-to-bumper traffic on their streets a year ago.

When word spread that the explosively popular new smartphone app Waze was sending many of those cars through their neighbourhood in a quest to shave five minutes off a daily rush-hour commute, they were angry and ready to fight back.

They figured they would outsmart the app, some said, by using it to report phoney car crashes and traffic jams on their streets that would keep the shortcut-seekers away.

Months later, the cars are still there, and the people are still mad.

That's because the app can't be outsmarted, Waze spokeswoman Julie Mossler said.

"With millions of users in L.A., fake, co-ordinated traffic reports can't come to fruition because they'll be negated by the next 10 people that drive down the street passively using Waze," she said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Low oil prices

OPEC chief calls for oilfield investment

The secretary-general of OPEC on Sunday urged Gulf Arab nations to keep investing in oilfield development despite the plunge in crude prices and gave no indication the cartel was prepared to shift its strategy to halt the slide.

Oil prices have shed nearly half their value since late June, including a four per cent tumble Friday that left benchmark U.S. oil prices at $57.81 US a barrel — their lowest level since May of 2009, when the U.S. was still in recession.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Schools must do a better job of teaching money basics: Expert

Money, money, money. Canadian educators need to do more to help our young learn about balancing their books

A more cohesive approach to teaching money management to students is needed, say experts. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Educators across Canada are increasingly seeing the value of teaching kids the basics of money management at a young age, but some experts warn the patchwork of programs being offered in schools can only go so far in helping students avoid major money pitfalls down the line.

School systems in several provinces — including Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan — have in recent years added elements of financial literacy to the core classes taught through elementary and high school, while British Columbia more than a decade ago created a mandatory Grade 10 financial life skills class.

But in order to make those lessons truly sink in, schools must have a designated financial capability curriculum that's applied across the board, some experts say.

"Unless you have a focused, consistent curriculum designed specifically and implemented across the majority of grades, so it knows where it ended last year and it's going to pick up and add more information .... it's never going to work," said Gail Vaz-Oxlade, the financial guru behind the TV show Til Debt Do Us Part and author of Money-Smart Kid$ and other books.

"And the problem we have right now is that by using the word money or using money context for traditional lessons, (school) boards are convincing parents that they're putting financial literacy into schools — but they're not," Vaz-Oxlade said.

In Ontario, the focus in the classroom is largely on the math aspect of money management, "but those things are not the issue in terms of how to deal well with money," she said. "The issue in terms of how to deal well with money are things like you can't spend more money than you make."

A 2012 study by the Investor Education Fund found only 40 per cent of participating Ontario high school students felt somewhat or very prepared to manage their finances after graduation, and roughly a quarter said their schools gave them most or all the financial information they needed.

Sixty-nine per cent said they thought personal finance should be taught in the classroom, according to the study, which was based on an online poll of 400 high school students. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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VOICES

NEW COURT ORDERS

Should you be questioned on your way to court? Metro's Steve Collins ponders this matter while carrying a caulking gun on his person

STEVE COLLINS
ottawa@metronews.ca

My first clue, a few weeks ago, that something was up at the Elgin Street courthouse was finding the entrance off Laurier closed, with yellow security tape strung up inside for good measure.

The doors had been sealed during October's Parliament Hill shooting and then remained locked down afterward. Now everyone must use the main Elgin Street entrance. Metal detectors, demands for ID and possible searches, all backed by provincial legislation, are expected by spring. Never mind that there's never been a serious incident here since the building opened in the '80s.

They're already ramping up. Police now operate a checkpoint to screen everyone coming in. I was taken aback the first time they asked, politely, what my business was in the courthouse.

"Oh, a little light perjury, maybe something frivolous and vexatious if there's time," I absolutely did not say. Instead, I obediently told them I was heading for the civil registry and then corrected myself. I'd be going to the washroom first and didn't want them to see me walking off in the wrong direction. Mother, may I?

We've all been conditioned for compliance over the past decade of post 9/11 security overkill, but it can still produce this kind of second-guessing weirdness. On my second trip through the new security regime, I'd come from the hardware store, and in the pocket of my coat was a metal caulking gun.

The promised metal detectors haven't been set up yet, and I have yet to be searched, but I was slightly nervous nonetheless. Could I defuse any misunderstandings by pre-emptively declaring my cargo, and could I do so without using the highly inadvisable word 'gun'?

Fortunately, the courthouse is full of lawyers, not all of whom are meekly accepting the new security measures, especially the questioning. "Our view is that it's people's own business why they're there," said Trevor Brown, president of the Defence Counsel Association of Ottawa.

And from what he's observed, while the screening is being done in a respectful manner (I agree), he's concerned that it's being done at all. "The courts are public spaces. It's where people go to know what is happening with our justice system, and it's got to be an open and transparent and, above all, accessible process. And anything that chills people's access to the courts, anything that might dissuade them from accessing the courts, is problematic."

His association participates in regular meetings about courthouse procedures and intends to oppose some of the changes. I'm encouraged that somebody is making a fuss. It bears mentioning that while police are quite properly responsible for courthouse security, police conduct is also regularly at issue in court proceedings.

It's not hard to imagine someone whose case hinges on police acts or omissions being intimidated by a police cordon with the power to question them, search them and ultimately decide whether they get into the courthouse or not. Even those who casually show up to watch hearings, whether you think they're rubberneckers or voyeurs, are important witnesses. They're seeing justice done (or not) and they shouldn't have to explain to anybody the reason for their presence in their own courts.

Your Ottawa

Shouters fall short of record

Singers from the Shout Sisters Choir in Ottawa attempted to break a world record Sunday at city hall for the most people singing Jingle Bells while ringing bells in their hands — but were unsuccessful. The group was aiming to break a 488-person record that organizer Vivian Sollows said was set in Albany, N.Y. A final tally counted 350 confirmed singers, so Sollows says she wants to try again next year.

JEFF HARPER/METRO

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Upcoming

Skate for Kids this afternoon

Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk will host local children at the Canadian Tire Centre as part of the Eugene Melnyk Skate for Kids. This year's event, which will feature more than 100 children enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime experience, will take place today from noon to 2 p.m. Melnyk, along with Santa Claus, Spartacat and other special guests, will present each participant with early Christmas presents, including a Senators jersey, a helmet and a brand-new pair of skates — all donated by Melnyk. It's the 11th year Melnyk has hosted the event for underprivileged kids. METRO

The Arctic goes to school

The Museum of Nature will unveil a new gymnasium-sized map of the Arctic on Tuesday morning with the help of Grade 5 and 6 students from St. Gabriel School in Kanata. The map and its curriculum-based educational activities, developed by Canadian Geographic in partnership with the Canadian Museum of Nature, will tour schools across Canada starting in January. The "Arctic Alive" map allows people to explore the natural diversity of Canada's North: plants, animals, fossils and minerals. It includes 10 curriculum-linked activities for teachers and a trunk of real Arctic specimens that encourage students to challenge their perceptions about the diversity and geography of Canada's Arctic. The public can try out the map from Dec. 26 to Jan. 4 as part of the museum's holiday programming. METRO

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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Iggy Azalea ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Even if Iggy were born a man, he would never be called Cody

Some stars just ignore all the weird rumours that go around about them, and some offer firm but boilerplate denials.

But, every once in a great while, some find just the right way to brush off the gossip while coming off as awesome in the process.

Case in point? Iggy Azalea actually deigned to respond to bizarre rumors that she wasn't always a girl named Iggy.

"Wait, so I'm just now reading that I was born a man and my name is Cody?" she posted to Twitter, following up with, "I just don't see myself as a Cody. I'm more of a Liam, if I had a penis."

You win this round of the Internet, Ms. Azalea.

Oh, and she was understandably worried about how these new revelations would affect her career.

"Am I still gonna get my Billboard women in music award tomorrow, now that I supposedly have a penis or nah," she tweeted.

Queen's garden adds magic to her majesty

During The Queen's Garden, a TV special set to air in the U.K. at Christmas, horticulturist Alan Titschmarsh apparently stumbled upon some magic mushrooms in the gardens of Buckingham Palace.

"It's eaten in some cultures for its hallucinogenic effects, but it also makes people who eat it very sick," an ecology professor explains to Titschmarsh, according to the Telegraph.

"The old-fashioned thing to do was to feed it to the village idiot, then drink his urine, because you get all of the high without any of the sickness."

Well, then!

But don't get too excited about any Royal Family vision quests just yet. A Palace spokesman was quick to tell the Sun that "fungi from the garden are not used in the Palace kitchen."

But man, if they were? That could really liven up the Queen's Christmas Day address.

Oh well. Instead, maybe some commoners can sneak in, chow down on the mushrooms and have a great time saying Titschmarsh's name over and over again.

Queen Elizabeth

Panettiere 'over the moon' that she is no longer the shortest in her family

Nashville star Hayden Panettiere has a baby girl, just in time for Christmas.

The pint-sized actress gave birth to daughter Kaya Evdokia Klitschko last week, her first child with much taller fiancé Wladimir Klitschko, her rep confirms to People magazine.

"We are over the moon and madly in love," the new parents say in a statement.

The couple announced their engagement in October. No word yet on whether baby Kaya will take after the taller or the shorter side of the family.

Hayden Panettiere

Marco Perego and Zoe Saldana

Zoe Saldana is ecstatic to finally 'drop' her twin boys

Speaking of celebrity birthings, Guardians of the Galaxy star Zoe Saldana gave birth to twins last week, as reported by the Daily Mirror. The babies — rumoured to be twin boys — mark the first children for Saldana and husband Marco Perego.

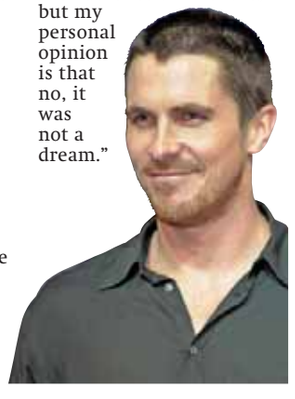
"Zoe and Marco are delighted. Zoe has been ready to drop for some time, and they are both ecstatic to be meeting the twins," a source with a penchant for over-sharing tells the newspaper. Seriously, "ready to drop for some time"?

To dream or not to dream? Christian has the answer

You know who's a good authority about Christopher Nolan's Batman films? Bruce Wayne himself, Christian Bale, who's happy to set people straight on some of their wilder theories.

For instance, there are fans who believe the ending of Dark Knight Rises, in which Michael Caine's Alfred sees Bruce Wayne alive and well in Florence, is all a dream. Well, Bale says you're wrong.

"That was for real," Bale says during an Entertainment Weekly radio chat. "I find it very interesting. With most films, I tend to always say it's what the audience thinks it is, but my personal opinion is that no, it was not a dream."



Christian Bale

Jack White's new app treats fans to live performances of his latest tracks. AFP FILE PHOTO

Jack White releases new 3D virtual reality app

Tech. Musician's fans will be treated to a 360-degree, 3D live performance

Jack White, the former White Stripes frontman, is the latest rock star to embrace the immersive musical possibilities of sliding a smartphone into a VR headset.

White's app, called Jack White: Third-D, is designed to work with Google's do-it-yourself VR headset, Project Cardboard. Sliding any Android headset with a 5-inch or greater display into the headset will treat the wearer to a 360-degree stereoscopic 3D live performance of a number of White's latest tracks. AFP

Other artists

Jaunt, the company behind White's app, has also produced an app for Paul McCartney, which offers users a similarly immersive take on a recent live performance of Live and Let Die complete with pyrotechnics.

Consumers bugged by video game glitches

Issue. Tight timelines for releases of highly anticipated titles mean that consumers are having to deal with glitches in their games

A shot from Assassin's Creed Unity. The video game industry is raking in record profits, but many developers are facing criticism as recent big-budget releases have been rushed to market with technical problems. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The video game industry is raking in record profits, but many developers are facing criticism as recent big-budget releases have been rushed to market with technical problems. Ubisoft CEO Yannis Mallat issued a mea culpa earlier this month for the November release of Assassin's Creed Unity, acknowledging that the overall quality of the game "was diminished by bugs and unexpected technical issues. I want to sincerely apologize on behalf of Ubisoft and the entire Assassin's Creed team," read Mallat's statement. "These problems took away from your enjoyment of the game, and kept many of you from experiencing the game at its fullest potential."

The company — which has development offices in Toronto and Montreal that employ more than 2,000 people — intends to offer free downloadable content or a free game for those who bought the product before it was patched with a software update. "I think it's admirable, but no doubt a blemish on what should be their flagship product of the year. But they're certainly not alone in shipping a game that's not finished," says Marc Saltzman, a Toronto-based syndicated video game critic. Saltzman notes a disturbing "ship now, fix later" trend, where developers are taking advantage of customers' Internet bandwidth to repair a game after it's already been released.

American video game industry consultant and author Scott Steinberg says the Ubisoft decision to publicly apologize was "very rare" for any company, and believes the move will set a precedent in the industry.

"I think you probably will see more and more companies, if errors of this magnitude are encountered, being called upon to address the issue," he said. "But even if you can throw an army of people at trying to stamp out these bugs — as wide of a net as you can cast — things are still going to slip through."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Download this! Metro gives you its weekly picks for the best in gaming, apps and ebooks

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
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Ebook

Frozen: The Cinestory

By. Robert Simpson, Erik Burnham, & Josh Elder

Kindle/iBooks

Fans have long been using movie screengrabs to tell their own stories on Tumblr. Here, Disney adopts the practice to transform Frozen into a beautiful graphic novel, adding a bit of magic with a window that highlights each panel as you read. You'll have to add your own music, sadly, but it truly does feels like you're reading the movie.

App

Ideas for Elves

iPhone/iPad
Free

This Elf on the Shelf holiday countdown app offers daily activities such as crafting marshmallow igloos, candy campfires, and pom-pom snowballs. They're for the elf toy, but that's merely optional.

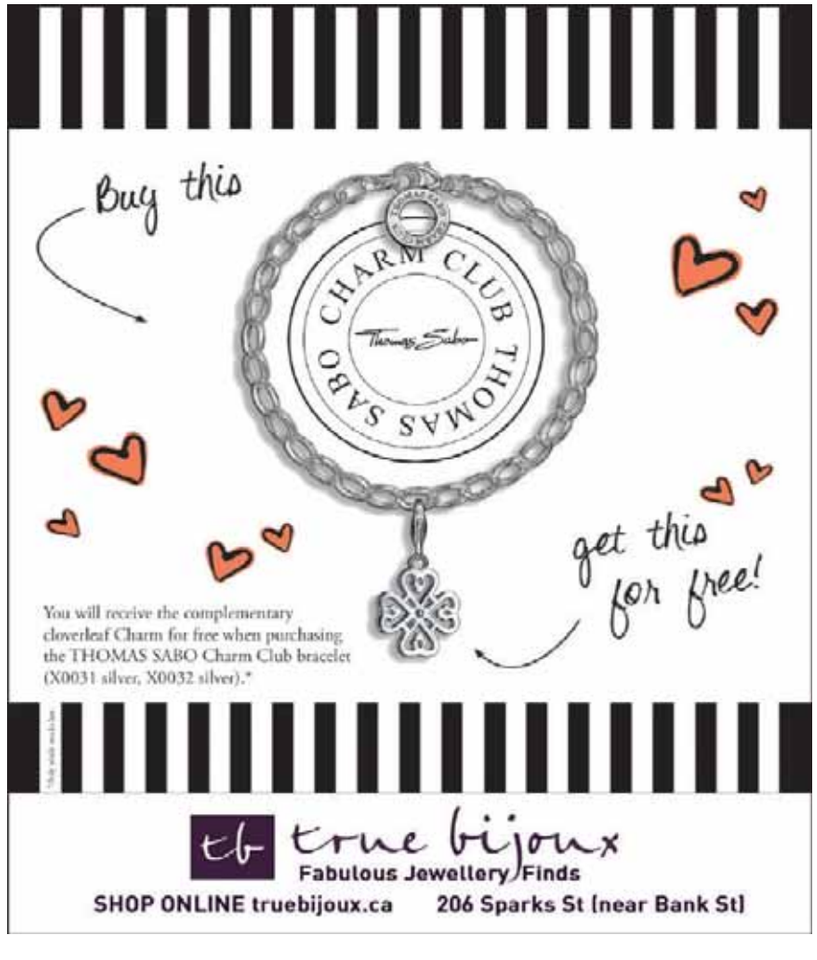
Video game

Name. Dragon Age Inquisition

For. PS3/PS4/Xbox 360/ Xbox One/PC

Rated. Mature 17+

Managing an adventure isn't as exciting as being the hero of one. As your party quests across dangerous lands, you must also direct an army by recruiting agents, establishing camps, and claiming new territories. Nothing kills the romance of a quest faster than administrative duties and this land of dungeons and dragons has many. Your attention can only drift away.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Review

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Director. Jonathan Liebesman

Stars. Megan Fox

Cowabungle! This gang of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles feels like they've been shell-shocked since their last live-action go-round 24 years ago.

Michael Bay takes lead producer credit for this dud — directing blame goes to Jonathan Liebesman (Battle Los Angeles) — but the Transformers tyrant's greasy paw prints are all over this movie. Even the Turtles' pizza, a product plug for Pizza Hut, is just another of Bay's blatant cash grabs. The original 1980s comic book creations were a parody of superhero sagas.

Something has been lost. The turtles are now conjured by motion capture, CGI and voiceover instead of having actors in cuddly rubber suits as before. And while the 2014 versions arguably look more "real" than their 1990 counterparts, they aren't nearly as charming.

PETER HOWELL

Behold the rise of the YouTubers

Virtual stardom. More and more entertainers are flipping on their webcams and building their own audiences

When Lilly Singh arrived on the set of the Kunal Nayyar movie Dr. Cabbie earlier this year, she faced a bit of a learning curve.

The 26-year-old already had millions of fans and was regularly mobbed by teenage girls at the mall. But the Markham, Ont.-based star wasn't a famous actress or pop singer — she was a YouTuber.

"I went on set and I just started acting right away. They were like, 'No, no, we need to call action,"' Singh recalled with a laugh during a recent telephone interview.

"I'm like, 'You have to call action? What do you mean? No one calls action for me. I call action!"'

Singh is among a new generation of entertainers who are finding massive success on YouTube. With self-produced, low-budget videos, YouTubers are attracting devoted fan followings, earning steady paycheques and increasingly landing film roles, TV shows and record deals.

On her channel IISuperwomanII, Singh posts comedy videos twice a week for her 4.4 million subscribers. She typically shoots them in her parents' house in Markham, where she lives. She plays multiple characters — male and female — with a goofy, refreshing lack of self-consciousness.

With videos like How Girls Get Ready and Types of Kids at School, Singh has fostered a largely suburban, teenage female audience. She often finds humour in her relationship with her Indian parents, frequently donning a fake beard and thick accent to portray her dad.

"I don't feel the need to be this perfect, very pretty type of person, and I think my fans really relate to that," said Singh. "A lot of times they tell me, 'You're so real, and you make me OK with being myself."'

Singh said her upbringing in Scarborough, a diverse suburb of Toronto, greatly influenced her comedic style. One of her first videos to go viral was titled (Stuff) Punjabi Mothers Say, which has now been viewed more than four million times.

"When I first started, inevitably (my fan base was) majority Indian, because my videos were titled, like, 'My Indian parents so-and-so.' Now, I don't do that anymore because I very quickly realized you don't have to put Indian in the title because it applies to everyone, for the most part," she said.

"Even if I'm talking about my (South) Asian parents, I can do it in a way that someone who has Jamaican parents, or Chinese parents, they can relate to it as well."

YouTube creates room for alternative voices that aren't well-represented in mainstream media, said Aubrey Anable, an instructor at the University of Toronto's Department of Visual Studies who has studied digital culture. "There are a lot of YouTube celebrities that are minorities, or their type of performance or what they are doing on YouTube is not something that can be easily found in mainstream media culture," she said.

She said YouTube stardom is distinct from traditional TV and film fame because of a greater sense of intimacy between creator and fan. Often YouTubers shoot their videos in domestic spaces like bedrooms, directly address their fans and appeal to them to subscribe or leave a comment. "All of these are unique to YouTube and I think it creates this sense of connection between amateur YouTube celebrities and their fans," she said.

Of course, the line between YouTube and the mainstream entertainment industry is becoming increasingly blurred, Anable said. Not only are pop stars and TV networks setting up YouTube channels to promote and share their products, but YouTube stars like Singh are landing roles in feature films.

Famously, Justin Bieber was first discovered because of his YouTube videos.

Grace Helbig, an American YouTube star who recently published a book, Grace's Guide: The Art of Pretending to be a Grown-Up, said the online video platform suits her introverted nature.

"I feel there's a common thread in a lot of online content creators. There's an introvertedness there that I think is just a personal attribute that's shared among the community," she said in an interview last month. "I think it's like a group of introverted control freaks are basically YouTubers. It's people that like owning what they do and like being the boss of what they do, but also enjoy quieter moments alone."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The money

For those curious about how YouTubers earn money, YouTuber and Toronto comedian Megan MacKay said she is paid through the site's partner program, which places advertising on and around her video content. With YouTube taking 45 per cent off the top, a million hits makes her about two thousand dollars. "It's not like, 'I'm filling a swimming pool with money and I'm going to swim in it for the rest of my life' money, but it's the job. It is a job for a lot of people," she said.

YouTube sensation Lilly Singh made her mark playing multiple characters and poking fun at suburban life.

THE CANADIAN PRESS HANDOUT

How to rise from the debt

Your money. Figure out if you're carrying too much debt and what to do about it if you are

GAIL VAZ-OXLADE
Gail blogs daily at gailvazoxlade.com

Our tolerance for debt has gone way, way up. Some folks believe everyone's got some debt. Hey, if you have a mortgage that's manageable, I've got no beef with you.

But if you're carrying even a penny in consumer debt — balances on your credit card or line of credit, overdraft, buy-now-pay-later loans — it is too much debt.

That being said, I know that there are folks who are trying to get rid of their debt.

If you're spending up to 15 per cent of your income for debt repayment (not including your car payments and your mortgage), you're on your way to debt freedom.

To calculate what percentage of your income you're spending on debt repayment, add up your monthly debt repayment amounts (not including car payments and mortgage), divide that by your monthly take-home pay, and multiply it by 100.

If you're spending $670 a month paying off your credit cards, student loans, line of credit, furniture loan, or whatever else, and you make $3,100 net a month, your calculation would look like this: 670 / 3100 x 100 = 21.6%

If you're spending 15 per cent or less of your monthly income paying off your debt then you're probably OK from a cash-flow perspective. If you're spending more than that, uh-oh!

The words "paying off" are important. If you're spending 15 per cent or more of your income just meeting your minimum monthly payments you're gonna be in debt for a long, long, long, long time and you're going to pay *gobs* of interest.

Have you looked at the line at the bottom of your credit card statement that says, "If you make only the minimum payment each month (on your $6,369.36 balance), we estimate it will take 55 years and 10 months to fully repay the outstanding balance."

Cripes! (Taken directly off my credit card statement that I paid in full immediately!)

If you have a $3,000 balance on a credit card charging 14.98 per cent interest, and pay a two per cent minimum every month, it will take 26 years to pay off your balance and cost you a total of $7,440 in interest. Seriously, that stuff you bought on sale just cost you three times as much as you planned!

Get that money burden off your back by paying off your debt. ISTOCK

Why are you doing this to yourself?

1. Admit you have a problem. Say it out loud right now: "I have a problem with my debt." If you aren't prepared to admit you're in trouble, no one can help you. If you aren't prepared to add up the mess you're in, quit your whining. If you want things to change, start by saying, "I have a problem with my debt."
2. Write down every penny you spend. Whether you spend $1.25 for coffee or $600 on a fabulous new pair of shoes, write it down. This is how you become accountable for forfeiting your future in the name of an immediate pleasure. When you look over your list at night — yes, you have to look over the list every night — ask yourself why you're really buying. Did you get a rush? Did you feel pleasure? How are you feeling now?
3. Switch from credit to cash. It is way easier to charge something than it is to fork over cold, hard cash.
4. Commit to paying off your debt. Grab a calculator and figure out how much it will take each month to be out of debt by a specific date. Then allocate the majority of the money to paying off your most expensive debt first while you make minimum payments on the other debts. Once your first debt is paid off, reallocate that money to your next most expensive debt. Keep going till you're out of the hole.
5. If you must find a way to make more money to get out of debt, so be it. You played and now it's time to pay. More work may be what it takes. The upside: You'll be so busy earning, you'll have very little time or energy left to spend. Life is expensive enough. Get rid of the interest costs so you can use your money for *you* instead of making some lender richer!

Here are 5 more signs you may be in over your head:

1. If you find that you seem to have less and less money for things like food.

2. If you keep dipping into your savings, keep trying to refinance, or have to take a payday advance loan.

3. If you keep hitting the ceiling on your credit cards. As you pay your balance, do a balance transfer to reduce your costs, or refinance in some other way, you're right back to the limit on your credit in no time flat.

4. If you can't find two red cents to put into an emergency fund. No emergency fund means that the first time trouble rears its ugly head, you'll be right back to using credit to fill your financial gap.

5. If you can't sleep at night — if you toss and turn or awake in a cold sweat — you're in trouble.

WANT TO BE SMARTER ABOUT YOUR MONEY? GO TO MYMONEYMYCHOICES.COM AND FOLLOW THE ROADMAP TO SUCCESS.

When and how to wean kids off gift list

It's a discussion some families have in the lead-up to the holidays. Others avoid it because it can be awkward; everyone isn't always on the same page.

But side-stepping dilemmas rarely solves them, so let's just put it out there. If you buy holiday gifts for the children in your extended family, does there come a point when you can stop?

Sadly, there appears to be no single answer. But some etiquette experts have offered suggestions to help.

Let's start with Judith Martin, better known as Miss Manners, who says an important point to keep in mind is that there is no need to stop buying gifts for nieces and nephews. If you enjoy doing so, you may continue.

Should you wish, however, to at some point transition from giving gifts to sending a seasonal letter or card, Martin suggests a surprisingly tender age as a potential demarcation point.

"The first cut-off would be ... children who have learned to write but don't," Martin says with a bit of bite to her delivery.

She refers, of course, to children who do not pen thank-you notes to express gratitude for the presents they have been sent.

Anna Post of the Emily Post Institute suggests the point at which children stop going out for Halloween might be a time when you could think about altering gift-giving patterns, if that is a goal.

Karen Cleveland, the Toronto-based writer of the blog Finishing School, suggests the point at which nieces and nephews start to earn an income might also be a reasonable time to discontinue gift-giving.

All three agree the question isn't simply "when?" but "how?"

Post suggests using transition gifts, moving at a point to buying a small token gift — a lovely Christmas tree ornament, if Christmas is the holiday being celebrated — rather than a larger present. Or buying a present for the family as a whole, instead of for each individual child.

Letting the future former recipients of your gifts — or their parents — in on your plans is good form, says Cleveland.

"The earlier you make changes to established traditions, the more time people have to get used to the idea," Post says. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Share your plan before taking kids off the family holiday gift list. ISTOCK

Money 101. Two couples, one year to make them richer

An $86,000 money makeover

I ran an experiment through 2014 to see how I could improve the financial wealth of two Canadian couples in 12 months. By helping each couple focus on building their net worth, collectively they improved their bottom line by $86,000. There weren't any lottery tickets or magic wands involved in this financial transformation. Rather, the couples set ambitious, yet realistic, financial goals, and were held accountable for their actions, learning to navigate the financial ropes of homebuying, family planning, investing and debt reduction. You can do it, too. – *Lesley-Anne Scorgie*

Anne-Marie and Peter knocked their financial goals out of the park over the past 12 months. SHUTTERSTOCK

Carolina and Jose pulled themselves out of the red and improved their net worth by $37,000 in 2014. SHUTTERSTOCK

Anne-Marie and Peter

Anne-Marie and Peter recap

- Location: Toronto
- Ages: 37 and 33
- Occupations: Broadcasting and sports editing
- Total household income: $120,000
- Life stage: First child arrived in May
- Financial savvy: Medium to high — they use budgets, have retirement savings, and are committed to paying off debt
- Rent or own: Rent
- Net worth: $115,000

Through their detailed approach to budgeting, discipline, and savvy investment choices, Anne-Marie and Peter improved their net worth by $49,000 in 12 months. Their net worth in January was $66,000, and is now $115,000.

2014 goals

When I first met Anne-Marie and Peter in January, they shared their ambitious financial goals for the year: Become debt-free; start an RESP for their daughter; and save for a down payment for a home.

We focused on debt reduction tactics such as negotiating interest rates on debt, squeezing more out of their budget through living frugally, earning money through raises and promotions, and pumping up their RRSP savings so they can eventually use these funds to purchase their first home through the RRSP Home Buyers' Plan. This tax-advantaged program allows first-time homebuyers to borrow money through their RRSP to put towards a down payment.

Accomplishments

Not only did the couple knock their goals out of the park, they also took care of other important financial business, including: Setting up a will; purchasing life insurance; learning the basics about savvy investing; securing a $10,000 raise for Peter; and creating a five-year financial plan.

When Anne-Marie and Peter crossed the threshold of $100,000 in net worth, they celebrated their success with an affordable and incredible trip to Ireland.

Greatest challenges for 2015

The largest barriers Anne-Marie and Peter face in 2015 are rising home prices in Toronto, the high costs of child care, and an uncertain stock market that could affect the value of their investments.

Top two tips going forward

• Tip 1 — Anne-Marie and Peter should purchase their home ASAP because their rent is inching close to $2,000 per month.

• Tip 2 — Get over the financial fears of having a second child. Through increased income, budgeting in advance and by building equity in a home, affording a second child is possible.

THE NAMES OF BOTH COUPLES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THEIR PRIVACY.

Carolina and Jose

Carolina and Jose recap

- Location: Calgary
- Ages: 33 and 32
- Occupations: Stay-at-home mom and roofing
- Total household income: $65,000
- Life stage: Three daughters, aged five, three and one
- Financial savvy: Medium — they have established a budget, purchased a home, are frugal, and have no retirement savings
- Rent or own: Own
- Net worth: $3,300

Though their income was tight, and list of financial priorities long, Carolina and Jose pulled themselves out of the red this year and improved their net worth by $37,000. At the beginning of the year, the couple's net worth was –$33,700, but increased to $3,300.

2014 goals

In January, Carolina and Jose expressed their desire to own a home — a place to call their own. They also wanted to make a dent in their debt and save for a trip to Vancouver.

To help achieve their goals, we developed a plan to secure a 10 per cent down payment for a home through an early inheritance from Jose's parents.

We also focused on simple, but effective budgeting, debt reduction and saving skills. Though the couple hasn't taken their vacation to the West Coast, they plan to next year.

Accomplishments

The first major accomplishment for Carolina and Jose was overcoming their mental hurdle of having a lower income. Once they shifted their thinking from not having enough to stretching what they have, they took massive strides toward improving their net worth.

In 2014, they purchased a $250,000 home, weaned themselves off of student loan repayment assistance, secured a promotion and salary increase of $10,000 for Jose, saved $3,600 towards an emergency fund, bought life insurance, established a will, and created a five-year financial plan.

Greatest challenges for 2015

Carolina and Jose must decide when, and if, to increase their income. As a single-income household, their financial choices are limited and they can't afford to save for their future, let alone that of their children.

Top two tips going forward

• Tip 1 — Carolina should secure a part-time job to bolster the couple's income, allowing them to start saving for retirement.

• Tip 2 — Pay off their debts.

LESLEY-ANNE SCORGIE IS A FINANCIAL COACH, FOUNDER OF MEVEST, A FINANCIAL COACHING FIRM, AND BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF WELL-HEELED AND RICH BY THIRTY. FOLLOW @LESLEYSCORGIE AND #METROMONEYCOUPLES.

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Your holiday party doesn't have to be as awkward as one straight out of an episode of The Office. ISTOCK

Be the star of your office holiday party

Career. An etiquette expert explains why the holiday party is the biggest networking opportunity of the year

LAKSHMI GANDHI
Metro in New York City

It seems everyone has a horror story about their workplace's annual Christmas party — you don't have to look far to find tales of drunken bosses, inappropriate jokes or regrettable flirtations.

But one expert notes that it's also important not to let those stories distract from the fact that the annual winter gathering is also the perfect time to put your best foot forward in terms of your career.

"It's really one of the most important business days of your year," says Patricia Rossi, an etiquette coach and author of Everyday Etiquette: How to Navigate 101 Common and Uncommon Social Situations.

"It's the one time of the year you can get to someone higher up in the company that you can't get to normally."

Rossi shares these tips on how junior employees can work the room and shine during a holiday party.

Put on a smile and attend the function

"The first thing that you have to do is go," says Rossi. "The company has invested in it in terms of both time and money in organizing it."

And this isn't the occasion to be fashionably late or to just stop by for a few minutes, either.

"Arrive on time but don't be the last to leave," Rossi advises.

Don't just talk to your office buddies

"You want to move about the cabin — don't latch onto one person and talk to them all night," says Rossi. For the introverts out there, Rossi says it's also important to remember that almost everyone feels awkward when it comes to holiday parties.

"I was reading something that said something like 90 per cent of people don't know what to say at parties, so you know what? They probably are waiting for someone to talk to them."

Have some conversation topics in your pocket

Because it can be intimidating to saddle up to your company CEO or other high-ranking execs, most employees shy away from doing so.

Rossi says this is a mistake and that with some prep, you'll be able to chat with anyone.

"Have two or three interesting things to talk about," she advises. "If your company VP is a big donor to the Met, that means you know they like art."

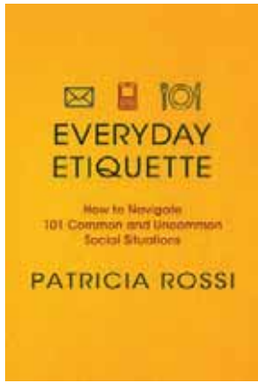
Say thank you afterward

Just like any other social event that takes lots of time and planning, it's a good idea to express gratitude after attending.

"Always send a thank-you note to the organizer of the party," says Rossi. "They put it together so that people could have fun and relax."

Always talk to the spouses

- "Your manager is probably going to be bringing a spouse," notes Rossi. "And the spouse is always nervous about attending these things. But if you talk to them and are engaging, on the ride home she or he will say, 'Oh, I met your employee and they were so lovely, so nice.'"



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Art students hone their craft with iPads

Career. Digital tools find a place in traditional fine arts classes

LAKSHMI GANDHI
Metro in New York City

What professional heights could you reach with your pad? ISTOCK

Like students at most art schools, the young women who attend the Moore College of Art in Center City, Philadelphia, spend first year on campus diving into the basics of art — learning the foundations of drawing, painting and sculpture.

But along with the pencils, brushes and crayons you'd expect to be in a young artist's tool kit, Moore students also rely on something much more high-tech: their iPads.

Since 2012, Moore has given every first-year student a new Apple device once they arrive on campus. Administrators say they decided to implement the program because they wanted to integrate the digital aspects of the curriculum with more traditional styles.

"One of the main ways the students use their iPads is as a multimedia sketchbook," says professor Lynn Palewicz, who teaches the foundation of art class all students must take.

"It's a wonderful container for ideas and allows for experimenting and exploring."

Digital natives

While the first generation of digital natives are now in college, many Moore students, such as Ava Mallett, hadn't thought to incorporate digital media into their work before they started classes.

"I actually didn't know that was a thing," says Mallet, a sophomore fine arts major who grew up in Texas.

Mallett says the tablet is particularly useful while experimenting with new ideas she's not completely sure of.

"Sometimes I will choose a different route with hash marks and colours. Doing that on a physical object is permanent," she notes, adding that having the option of trying things out has given her greater flexibility.

"I like having the iPad because I can have my notes when I prepare my ideas," says student Emily Eggly.

"I can use it for things like colour testing. And I've been using it to just get information also."

The learning curve

Some students were hesitant to embrace using their iPads in class alongside other tools.

- Mallett admits that she was one of them. "At first I thought, 'I'm just going to use it to take notes,'" she says. "But now I use it often."

Fewer email checks keep stress in check: study

Career. If you're looking for a way to relax, perhaps it's time to stop pressing refresh

Would you weep if you could no longer engage with that envelope? ISTOCK

If you're feeling stressed, put down the mouse and don't click "Inbox." It's the lesson to be learned from a new study that says easing up on email surveillance can reduce physiological stress.

A group of 124 adults, including students, financial analysts and medical professionals, participated in the two-week study in which they answered daily questionnaires about their stress levels.

One group was instructed to limit email checking to three times per day for a week and another was given the green light to check email as often as they could during that week.

One week later, the groups switched.

"Our findings showed that people felt less stressed when they checked their email less often," says Kostadin Kushlev, the study's lead author and a PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia's Department of Psychology.

Another finding uncovered by the study is that stepping back from email isn't easy, for Kushlev reports that most participants encountered difficulties with the intervention.

"This is what makes our obvious-in-hindsight findings so striking," says Kushlev. "People find it difficult to resist the temptation of checking email, and yet resisting this temptation reduces their stress."

Kushlev says his personal struggles with email inspired his study.

"I now check my email in chunks several times a day, rather than constantly responding to messages as they come in," he says. "And I feel better and less stressed."

The study was published in the journal Computers in Human Behavior.

AFP

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Mini loaf makes a yummy appetizer

Mini Cheese and Prosciutto Meat Loaf. If you're tired of Sunday night meat loaf, you have to try these unique miniature muffin-cup meat loaves topped with crispy prosciutto and cheddar cheese

ROSE REISMAN
For more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

I enjoy serving these because they cook in just a few minutes and can be the main meal or an appetizer.

Be sure to use lean ground beef to reduce the calories and fat.

Only 5 per cent of lean ground beef is from fat, whereas 20 per cent fat is in regular ground. A big difference if you're consuming ground beef on a regular basis.

If you're on the hunt for a homemade holiday appetizer, you've got to give these a try.

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a 12-inch muffin tin with vegetable oil.

2. Combine the ground beef, eggs, barbecue sauce, bread crumbs, green onions, garlic, basil and salt and pepper in a bowl.

3. Pat evenly into muffin tin. Add diced prosciutto over top.

This recipe serves six. ROSE REISMAN

4. Bake for approximately 20 minutes or just until temperature reaches 160 F.

5. Divide cheese over top and bake another two minutes or just until cheese melts.

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

Ingredients

- Vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 lb lean ground beef
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup barbecue sauce (or ketchup)
- 1/2 cup seasoned dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup finely diced green onions
- 2 tsp crushed garlic
- 1 tsp dried basil leaves
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- 1 1/2 oz diced prosciutto
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese (1 oz)

Nutritional information

Per serving

- **Calories** 256
- **Carbohydrates** 14 g
- **Fibre** 0.5 g
- **Protein** 28 g
- **Total fat** 9 g
- **Saturated fat** 4 g
- **Cholesterol** 118 mg
- **Sodium** 553 mg

Cauliflower gives veggie tabouli its crunch

Traditional tabouli is a Middle Eastern dish made with tomatoes, parsley, mint and bulgur.

I decided to add a twist and make this a grain-free dish, using shredded cauliflower as the base.

This is a delicious starter salad, side dish or main vegetarian dish.

If you don't have a food processor with a shredder blade, a hand grater can be used.

Ingredients

- 1 small head of raw cauliflower (1/2 large head) — broken in florets
- 1 cup finely chopped flat parsley
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 cup shredded romaine lettuce
- 2 finely chopped green onions
- 2 cups diced plum tomatoes
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1.2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- Salt and pepper

Directions

1. In food processor using grating blade, shred cauliflower. You can also process on and off in a food processor using the steel blade. (Do not purée). Place in large bowl.

2. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

ROSE REISMAN

This recipe serves six. ROSE REISMAN

Feast on these perfect pairings

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Even if you know your way around a wine glass, finding that perfect bottle to pour at your holiday feast can still be as frustrating as trying to catch Santa coming down the chimney.

This time of year my food and wine pairing advice is to see the big picture. Look beyond what you think will be the focal point of the meal and consider how all those tasty seasonal side dishes and trimmings will mingle with the main course.

To help make your Christmas dinner merry, I have chosen some popular holiday entrées and foolproof wines to match.

DUCK/GOOSE

Though a little Charles Dickens, both duck and goose make for a retro banquet. Their darker meat calls for a robust red with either brawny fruit character — such as a Zinfandel.

Ravenswood 2012 Vintners Series Old Vine Zinfandel (California, $17.95-$19.99): Plum, chocolate and a bushel of black fruit all supported by subtle oak.

Campo Viejo 2008 Rioja Reserva (Spain, $17.95-$22.99): Old-school elegance packed with dark cherry, cedar and exotic spice.

PRIME RIB ROAST

This new year's staple is a trendy alternative to turkey on Dec. 25. With fewer sides to consider, the focus becomes the meat in your mouth. Reach for a bottle of muscular Cabernet Sauvignon, a Merlot-led French Bordeaux blend or an Argentinean Malbec.

J. Lohr 2012 Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon (California, $21.95-$25.99): Rich and gutsy with ample depth and a mouthful of personality.

Christian Moueix 2009 Merlot (France, $16.95-$21.99): Super smooth with layers of cassis and cherry.

Catena Zapata 2012 Catena Malbec (Argentina, $18.45-$22.99): A meat lover's red with up-front black fruit and a backbone of peppery spice.

HAM

Lightly seasoned when served much of the year, come the holidays this little piggy gets its sweet and spicy glaze on. Keep your wine choice light, fruit-forward and not too boozy. Something slightly sugary like a white made with the ever-versatile Riesling or a Moscato would work like a charm, as would a refreshing Pinot Grigio. For a red, it's Pinot noir time again.

Voga 2013 Moscato Frizzante (Italy, $14.65-$16.99): Soft, plush and light on alcohol with just a touch of creamy effervescence.

Santa Margherita 2013 Pinot Grigio (Italy, $17.95-$21.49): This Grigio's heftier citrus edge will work wonders if your ham is honey-glazed.

TURKEY

Like Beyoncé at the Grammy awards, the big bird travels with a substantial entourage. Lacklustre served by his lonesome, Tom turkey begs to be draped with gravy and share a plate with stuffing, veggies and cranberry sauce so he can shine.

Look for wines with bright fruit and acidity, while avoiding those bone-dry or oaky. Think Riesling and Sauvignon blanc in whites and Pinot noir, Gamay and French Rhône blends in reds.

Relax 2013 Riesling (Germany, $11.95-$14.49): An off-dry Riesling with a light backbone of sugar that's a perfect foil for any of your sweeter sides.

Kim Crawford 2013 Sauvignon blanc (New Zealand, $19.95-$22.99): Loads of gooseberry and bright green fruit with a zesty finish.

Look at the big picture when pairing food and wine. SHUTTERSTOCK

Belle Glos 2013 Meiomi Pinot noir (California, $26.95-$29.99): Its thick, lip-smacking, berry-laden body works magic with a cornucopia of eatables, especially the earthiness of mushroom-themed dressing.

Louis Jadot 2012 Beaujolais-Villages (France, $18.95-$21.79): Gamay-based with a soft, fleshy flavour trail.

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metro HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2014

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Apps fit for the jolly old man

Santa's helper. Use these tools to keep on top of things this holiday

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

Did you buy all your presents? Are you on budget? Do you know what you are going to cook for Christmas dinner? Prepare for the holidays with a little help from your tablet and smartphone. Here are the apps you need to make sure you stay on top of things this holiday season:

The Christmas List, $1.99
iOS
This app may be the only one you need to get ready for the holidays. Track the gifts you need to purchase, who they are for, and your budgets all within this one app. You can also keep track of the status of each gift, whether they are shipped, wrapped, or received. In case you are forgetful, there is even a countdown for the number of shopping days left.

How to Cook Everything, $9.99
iOS
Were you strong-armed into making holiday dinner for the family? But the problem is you have never cooked a turkey before. Or a ham. Not even a chicken. Problem solved with this handy app. There are more than 2,000 recipes, plus 400 step-by-step illustrated cooking guides for making the most popular holiday dishes. If that's not enough, the built-in shopping list will ensure you aren't running to the store at the last moment because you forgot an important ingredient.

Secret Santa Generator by gjsalot, free
iOS, Android
An office tradition you either love or hate. Secret Santa gift exchanges can be a pain to set up, so why not let an app do the work for you. Select participants from your contact list on your smartphone, then submit them to the app, which will randomly match people for the gift exchange. The app then emails everyone with the name of the person they need to buy for. This also works well for family gift exchanges.

Canada Post, free
iOS, Android
If you ship presents or parcels, you will find this app useful. Find a post office, learn shipping rates and track parcels leading up to the holidays. The app also lets you create customized stamps from the photos you have on your smartphone or tablet.

Red Stamp, free
iOS
Put some creativity on your Christmas cards this year. Upload your favourite photo, then add captions to create the perfect greeting card. Once you have finished designing your card, you can either email it to friends, or have the card professionally printed and sent out to your friends and family, all within the app itself.

Left to right: Secret Santa Generator; Red Stamp; Canada Post.

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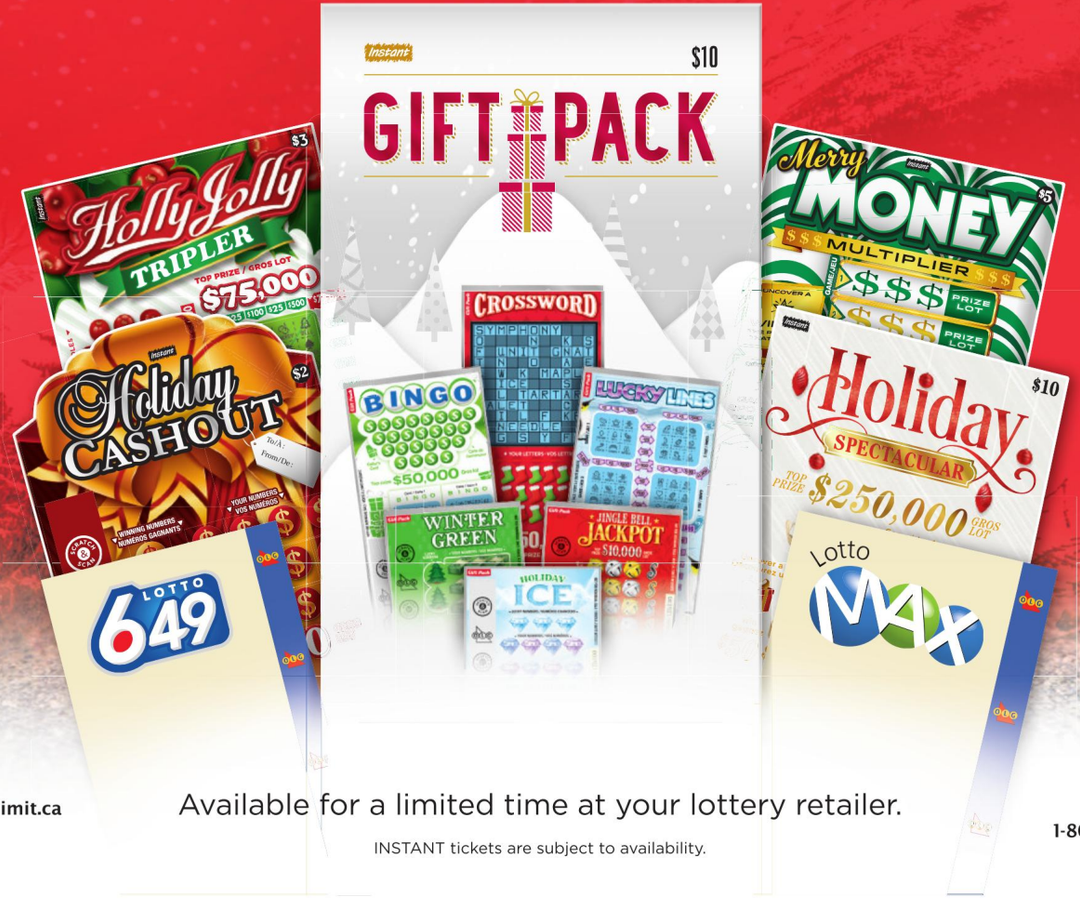

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Get wrapped up in holiday spirit

There's something about the thrill of waking up on Christmas morning to a mountain of gifts decorated with brightly coloured paper, festive ribbons and bows, inspired tags and unique accents.

Make sure your gifts don't get lost among the myriad of boxes stacked under the tree this year.

Let them stand out with truly original gift wrap, like these:

Remarkable wrapping

Start with a roll of blank kraft paper or a gift bag and freezer paper, which is made from a special plastic-coated material great for iron-on crafts.

First, cut holiday-themed stencils from the freezer paper.

Instead of making traditional reindeer, snowflake or snowman stencils, opt for something different that still has the essence of the holidays, like holly leaves, pine cones or candles. Position the stencils on the kraft paper and use a dry iron to adhere them.

Then, spray the paper with spray paint. Use white for a subtle effect, or burgundy for a bit more drama. Allow the paint to dry before removing the stencils and revealing the end result.

Ribbons, bows and other embellishments

After wrapping the gift with your custom-made paper, turn your attention to the ribbons, bows and other accents that will make your present pop.

For a unique approach to these details, take a look around your home and repurpose old or unused items to accessorize. There is inspiration everywhere.

Funky-patterned napkins can be used inside boxes to cushion delicate items or in gift bags to replace tissue paper as decorative stuffing. Use an unworn belt or shoelaces instead of ribbon to keep contents secure. Jazz up a lacklustre package with a glitzy brooch or an old ornament, transforming something ordinary into something extraordinary.

Gorgeous greetings

Once your gift is wrapped and beautified, it's time to think outside the box … specifically about the message you want to relay to the lucky recipient.

Store-bought gift tags are convenient, but not very personal. Try your hand at some easy handcrafted and thoughtful greetings that speak volumes.

Spray paint wooden letters or holiday-themed shapes with chalkboard paint, or write your favourite yuletide message.

Not only will these make your gift seem extra special, but the recipient can reuse them again and again. You can also use leftover kraft paper to create cards. Spray paint with a flashy colour like "glitter blast diamond dust" or "lucky green," and embellish with baker's twine, decorative buttons and winter-themed adornments like snowflakes.

Don't forget to write a personal message inside.

NEWS CANADA

Wrapping gifts is just as much fun as the gifts themselves. Well, maybe not, but it's still a big part of the holiday experience. NEWS CANADA

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Secret ingredients make wonderful whoopie pies

Christmas baking. Whoopie pies are a hit when entertaining and are sure to go quickly

Food Network chef Anna Olson.

This recipe makes 20 small, cupcake-sized whoopie pies. NEWS CANADA PHOTOS

Anna Olson, celebrity chef and host of Food Network Canada's Bake with Anna Olson, knows a thing or two about baking — and now she has something extra special to share.

"A whoopie pie is really not a pie at all, but is more like cupcake meets cookie," she said. "This recipe will give you two tender, cake-like cookies sandwiching a fluffy chocolate filling."

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F (180 C) and line two baking trays with parchment paper.

2. Sift the flour, cocoa powder and baking powder into a large bowl. Stir in the brown sugar. Add the butter and mix in using electric beaters on medium speed (or in a mixer) until pieces of butter are no longer visible (the mixture will look like cookie crumbs).

3. In a separate bowl, whisk the milk, egg and vanilla. Add this all at once to the dry ingredients and mix on low speed to incorporate. Increase the speed to medium high, beating for about two minutes until the batter is light and fluffy.

4. Using an ice cream scoop (¾-oz/22 mL) will yield 40 pieces. Scoop the batter onto the prepared baking trays, leaving two inches (5 cm) between each scoop. Bake for 13-15 minutes, until the top of the "cake" springs back when gently pressed. Cool the "cakes" completely on the baking tray before removing with a spatula.

5. For the filling, place the milk chocolate chips in a metal bowl placed over a pot filled with an inch of gently simmering water, stirring with a spatula until melted. Alternatively, you can melt the chocolate chips in the microwave on medium heat, stirring every 10 seconds until smooth. Set aside to cool slightly.

6. Beat the cream cheese with electric beaters (or in a mixer) until smooth, and then add half of the icing sugar, beating again until smooth (the filling will be runny). Add the melted milk chocolate, beating to incorporate, and then add the remaining icing sugar, beating on high speed until fluffy.

7. To fill, spread a generous amount (¾ tbsp/45-60 mL) onto to the bottom of one "cake" and then sandwich the filling with a second "cake." Alternatively, you can pipe the filling using a piping bag fitted with a large star or plain tip. The whoopie pies can be stored chilled for up to three days, but are best enjoyed pulled from the fridge 30 minutes before serving.

More baking inspiration for the holidays is available at hersheyskitchens.ca.

NEWS CANADA

Ingredients

Batter:
- 2 cups (500 mL) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (125 mL) cocoa powder
- 1½ tsp (20 mL) baking powder
- 1 cup (250 mL) packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup (125 mL) unsalted butter, at room temperature and cut into pieces
- 1 cup (250 mL) 2% milk
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp (15 mL) vanilla extract
- ½ cup (125 ml) milk chocolate chips

Filling:
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk chocolate chips
- 1 250g package cream cheese, at room temperature
- 3 cups (750 mL) icing sugar, sifted

Always in style: Dress them in holiday cheer

Christmas Sweater, Boys, $16, Joe Fresh, joefresh.ca

Snowflake Sweater, Boys, $19, Joe Fresh, joefresh.ca

White Cable-Knit Sweater Onsie, infant, $32.94, Old Navy, oldnavy.ca.

Festive Sequin Party Dress, girls, $75, Gap Kids, gapcanada.ca

Holiday Stripe Sweater One-Piece, infant, $39.95, babyGap, gapcanada.ca.

Crochet Baby Booties, $12.99, Marshalls, marshallscanada.ca

Mock Suit, infant, $29, Joe Fresh, joefresh.ca.

Festive Mary Jane Bow Flats, infant, $22.95, babyGap, gapcanada.ca

NBA

Kobe rises above Jordan on points list

Kobe Bryant has reached rarefied air.

The Los Angeles Lakers star passed Michael Jordan for third on the NBA's career scoring list Sunday night.

Bryant entered the game against the Minnesota Timberwolves needing nine points to pass the icon with whom he is often compared. He got the mark with two free throws with 5:24 to play in the second quarter.

Now only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Karl Malone have scored more points than Bryant.

It took Bryant 1,269 games to reach third on the NBA's career scoring podium. Jordan amassed his 32,292 points in 1,039 regular-season games.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Woe, Johnny

"I need to be better. It's tough to come out there and lay an egg like that and I put that on me. I'm not using the rookie excuse; it's not me. I needed to play better."

Cleveland quarterback Johnny Manziel who couldn't live up to the enormous hype surrounding his first NFL start as the Cincinnati Bengals rolled to a 30-0 win Sunday over the Browns, who were eliminated from the AFC North race and will likely miss the playoffs for the 12th straight year.

Bills' action stars rough up Rodgers

NFL. Super Mario and Rambo slow prolific Packer offence to a crawl

The Buffalo Bills' defence has a dynamic duo: "Super Mario" and a newcomer named Rambo.

Credit them for helping rattle Aaron Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers (10-4).

Bacarri Rambo came off the bench to replace injured backup safety Duke Williams to intercept Rodgers on consecutive drives in the second half. And veteran end Mario Williams put the finishing touches on a 21-13 victory Sunday by forcing Rodgers to fumble into the end zone for a safety with 1:51 left.

"It's a testament to what we do," defensive tackle Kyle Williams said, assessing how a dominating defensive effort contributed to keeping the Bills (8-6) in a jumbled playoff picture. "We've played against great quarterbacks, so the only expectation that we had was to play well and win a football game."

Marcus Thigpen scored on a 75-yard punt return, while Dan Carpenter hit all four field-goal attempts, including three in the second half.

The Bills are assured their first eight-win season since going 9-7 in 2004.

A week after ending Peyton Manning's consecutive game touchdown streak at 51 in a 24-17 loss at Denver, the Bills came away with a win by putting the clamps on one of the NFL's most prolific offences.

metro AR Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers reacts after Jordy Nelson dropped a pass in the second half of Sunday's game in Buffalo. The Packers had a five-game win streak snapped and squandered an opportunity to get closer to their sixth consecutive playoff berth. Scan the image with your Metro News app for more scores from around the NFL on Sunday. IAN CRYSLER/FOR METRO

On Sunday

Bills	Packers
21	13

"I wouldn't say statement win," safety Aaron Williams said. "We went up against a Hall-of-Famer last week. Why couldn't we do it again this week?"

The defence made up for a sputtering Kyle Orton-led offence, which was limited to 253 yards and 13 first downs. Orton finished 14 of 27 for 158 yards and an interception.

"It was frustrating," said Rodgers. "Some days are going to be like this. We set the standard pretty high, and we like to live up to it every week."

Rodgers went 17 of 42 for 185 yards, with two interceptions. He had been picked off just three times this season, and none since throwing two in Green Bay's last loss, 44-23 at New Orleans on Oct. 26.

It wasn't all on Rodgers, either, as he had little support from his receivers. That includes the usually reliable Jordy Nelson, who had a key drop late in the third quarter.

From his 6, Rodgers found Nelson wide open running up the right side. The pass hit Nelson in stride, but the ball glanced off the receiver's fingers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mumps force Penguins' Crosby to sidelines

Sidney Crosby was showing symptoms of the mumps at Penguins practice last week. COURTESY PENS TV

Add Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby to the growing list of NHL players dealing with the mumps.

The Penguins announced the diagnosis Sunday after holding the two-time MVP out of games over the weekend as a precaution when swelling developed on the right side of Crosby's face — swelling the team believed was related to a salivary gland injury Crosby sustained in a game against Carolina on Nov. 29.

Crosby was able to skate with the team on Friday morning but was pulled from the lineup for Friday night's game against Calgary after his condition worsened. He underwent further tests that revealed the presence of the disease. He is currently in isolation but should be through the infectious stage by Monday, though the team has already ruled him out on Monday night when Pittsburgh hosts the Tampa Bay Lightning.

Crosby received a booster shot against the virus before travelling to Russia for the Winter Olympics in February and initial tests done a couple of weeks ago indicated Crosby was not in any danger.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Symptoms

Those infected with mumps can have a fever, headaches, muscle aches, fatigue and loss of appetite, followed by the swelling of salivary glands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

4 SPORTS

Groulx trims Canada's roster

World juniors. Chris Bigras the first surprise to be let go.

Canada's world-junior journey will continue without Chris Bigras, who was among the first round of cuts despite being on last year's team.

Bigras, fellow defenceman Travis Sanheim and forwards Nick Baptiste, Morgan Klimchuk and Remi Elie were released Sunday evening after a selection camp that included two exhibition games against local university all-stars. Canada's roster stands at 25 players with main camp set to open Monday in St. Catharines, Ont.

The message from Benoit Groulx and his coaching staff to those players and the one they seemed to receive through the tough news was that this is a deep, difficult group to crack.

"We think that the players that we decided to keep are in our plans and I thought also there was a separation between those guys and the players we kept," Groulx said. "That's the reason why we decided to let them go."

Bigras was the biggest surprise because he played all seven games in last year's tournament and as a returning player figured to have a spot. Instead, the 19-year-old Colorado Avalanche prospect will go back to the Ontario Hockey League's Owen Sound Attack.

"Obviously not the outcome I was looking for," said Bigras, who's from Elmvale, Ont. "Can't dwell on it right now."

Groulx was an assistant coach last year in Malmo, Sweden, and understood it was "devastating" to Bigras to get cut this year. But it was his judgment that the eight defencemen Canada kept were "ahead" of Bigras.

"It's not about (what we didn't see) from him," Groulx said. "I think it's about the other defencemen we have. We think that the eight guys we decided to keep are just better than him right now."

Better than Sanheim, too. The raw Philadelphia Flyers first-round pick goes back to the Calgary Hitmen of the Western Hockey League hoping he can do better in this spot a year from now.

"(Coaches told me) just that I'm 18 years old and I've got a lot to look forward to," the Elkhorn, Man., native said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

After selection camp

- **Staying on.** Darnell Nurse, Josh Morrissey, Madison Bowey, Joe Hicketts, Shea Theodore, Haydn Fleury, Samuel Morin and Dillon Heatherington
- **Released.** Defencemen Chris Bigras and Travis Sanheim and forwards Nick Baptiste, Morgan Klimchuk and Remi Elie.

Team Canada's Brayden Point scores on CIS All-Stars from Toronto goaltender Michael Nishi in an exhibition game in Toronto on Sunday, in preparation for the upcoming IIHF World Junior Championships. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Man United rubs salt into Liverpool's wounds

Juan Mata celebrates his goal as Liverpool players regroup in dejection. United beat Liverpool 3-0 in Manchester, England, Sunday. JON SUPPER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester United heaped more misery on Liverpool by beating its great rival 3-0 in the Premier League on Sunday, earning a sixth straight win to underline the transformation in fortunes of these two teams.

Wayne Rooney and Juan Mata — from an offside position — scored to give United a 2-0 lead at halftime and Robin van Persie added the third in the 71st minute at Old Trafford.

While third-place United remained eight points behind leader Chelsea to maintain its unlikely title challenge, Liverpool is mid-table and struggling to recreate the form that took them to runners-up last season.

Not enough

"Winning now six matches in a row is fantastic, but we have to improve our playing style. And I am saying that nearly every week."

Manchester United coach Louis van Gaal

The score was harsh on Liverpool, with United goalkeeper David de Gea producing a string of brilliant saves to deny Raheem Sterling and substitute Mario Balotelli.

The visitors were also unlucky that Mata was not signalled offside when he headed home to make it 2-0 in the 40th, puncturing Liverpool's bright start.

"They were much more clinical when they needed to be," Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers said. "For their goalkeeper to get man of the match tells you everything."

But these are worrying times for Rodgers. He is lacking a clinical finisher in the absence of the injured Daniel Sturridge, his defence is in a mess and he has doubts about his first-choice goalkeeper Simon Mignolet, who was dropped here for Brad Jones. It ended a miserable week for Liverpool, which was eliminated from the Champions League on Tuesday.

Having spent around $250 million bolstering its squad, a title challenge is probably the least United's fans and owners expect — although none of the summer signings even started against Liverpool. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Record Cubs deal

Lester to get $15M upfront

Jon Lester set Major League Baseball records for largest signing bonus and biggest upfront payment with his $155 million, seven-year deal with the Chicago Cubs.

The pitcher's contract calls for a $30-million signing bonus, of which $15 million is due by April 1, a person familiar with the agreement told The Associated Press on Sunday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Speedskating

Hamelin takes gold at World Cup

Charles Hamelin got gold in the men's 1,000 metres at a short-track speedskating World Cup, in a six-medal Sunday for Canada.

Marianne St-Gelais won bronze in the women's 1,000 metres, while William Preudhomme and Kasandra Bradette won bronze in the men's and women's 500, respectively. Both men's and women's relay teams won bronze. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's Charles Hamelin leads the pack during the men's 1000-metre final in Shanghai on Sunday. JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ski World Cup

Hirscher rallies to beat Neureuther

Austrian skier Marcel Hirscher overcame a first-leg deficit to edge out German skier Felix Neureuther and win a World Cup slalom race in Are, Sweden on Sunday.

Hirscher trailed Neureuther by .25 seconds after the morning's first run but beat him by .10. Russian Alexander Khoroshilov finished .15 behind. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

First for Oregon

Mariota wins the Heisman Trophy

Marcus Mariota, the prototypical 21st-century quarterback, took an old-fashioned approach to become Oregon's first Heisman Trophy winner.

The Ducks' understated star won the Heisman on Saturday night going away, capping a three-year climb to college football's most prestigious individual award. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will need to be ruthless with yourself this week, especially on the work front where you are clearly doing too much.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You won't find it difficult to get your own way today but don't go too far and give others the impression you think you are better than them.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You may be fired up with enthusiasm for a new plan or project but not everyone is convinced. Does that matter?

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You need to face up to your problems and let certain people know that you will no longer be their whipping boy.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
If someone annoys you over the next two or three days, they are sure to regret it. You are in no mood to turn the other cheek. Watch out world!

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You seem to be in one of those moods when you are interested only in extremes. You will either do something very good or very bad today — there is no middle ground. Either way you will have fun.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will be in a confident mood today but you might try something you know is forbidden. In the long-term, you will certainly regret it.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Let everyone know what you expect of them today. Some may grumble and say you are exceeding your powers, but rather that than have them think you are weak.

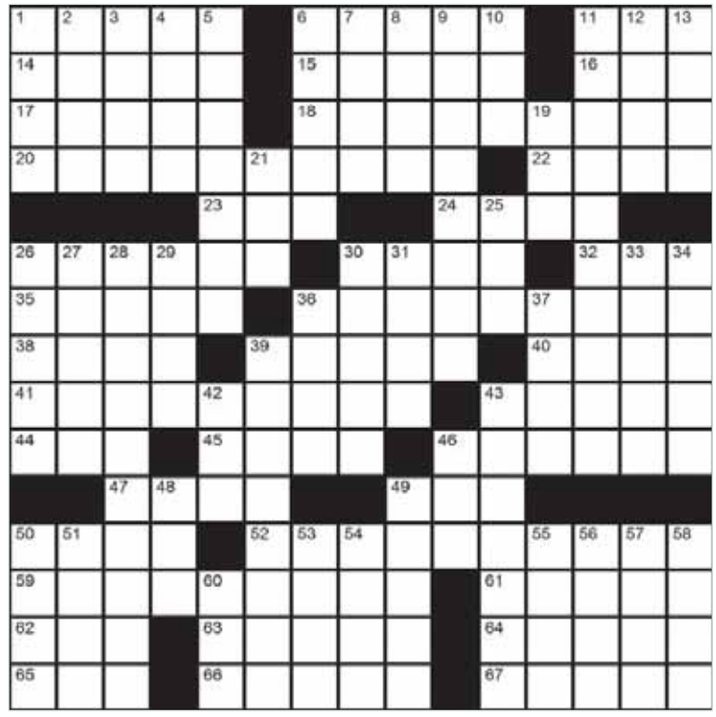
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Treat others as equals or they will make life difficult for you. And never take your nearest and dearest for granted.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Try not to come on too strong today or you could push away people who should be your friends and allies.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You are determined to finish that long list of chores. And that's good because the next few days are potentially some of your most creative of the year.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
A rival will throw down a challenge today and if you are smart you will pick it up and throw it right back at them. Most likely they will be so surprised that they immediately back off.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Knowledge of words, for short
6. Director Hal
11. 100 cents [abbr.]
14. "...the bombs bursting __...": 2 wds.
15. Chirp
16. Romance
17. Opera tune: "Nessun __"
18. Song by Canadian singer Mac DeMarco; or, Shakespearean times of youth: 2 wds.
20. Painter's display: 2 wds.
22. Loonies
23. Dallas, __.
24. __ of passage
26. MuchMusic fare
30. __-__ (Public event, '60s-style)
32. '_' __ for Camrose
35. Christina Aguilera's "_ __ to You"
36. Group speaking on behalf of cartoon characters: 2 wds.
38. Kennel noises
39. Sprite
40. Sonny __ (Montreal-based artist)
41. One of a popular candy: 2 wds.
43. Sigmund's surname
44. Heidi Montag's hubby ...his initials-sharers
45. Grannies: German
46. Like ceramics material
47. Plummet
49. Litigate
50. End in __ (Draw): 2 wds.
52. Works by Cheticamp, NS artist Elizabeth LeFort (b.1914 - d.2005): 2 wds.
59. Folklore
61. Birthplace of Columbus
62. Grampus
63. Take in once more
64. Toronto __ Centre
65. __-i-Noor Diamond
66. 'Disk' suffixes
67. Pilotless aircraft practice run, briefly

Down
1. Ricky Martin's "Livin' La __ Loca"
2. __ about (Circa): 2 wds.
3. Wagon
4. I like = J'__
5. Songstress Toni
6. When TV news airs: 2 wds.
7. Cotton __
8. Prefix to 'copter'
9. Princess Eugenie's sister
10. Financial rpt.'s 'until now'
11. Toronto Raptors head coach: 2 wds.
12. Ravel's "Ma Mere _'__" (Mother Goose)
13. "Friends" friend
19. Polka's pal
21. Guys
25. 'Benedict' suffix
26. Lab containers
27. "Let __ __!" (start)
28. Manitoba: Nickname of the Red River Floodway: 2 wds.
29. Gaelic
30. Cardboard containers
31. The Queen's cypher: letter + Roman Numeral + letter
33. Matter
34. Cram
36. "__ Las Vegas" (1964)
37. Fashion model Ms. Delevingne
39. Brochure
42. The __ (Sault Ste. Marie's nickname)
43. Full-__ (Established/qualified)
46. Theatrical tip
48. Showbiz Clue#1
49. Terrier types
50. "Star Trek" episode, __ Time
51. Newbie
53. Flemish painter, Jacob van __ the Elder
54. S-shaped moulding
55. Raise
56. Poet's preposition
57. Continue: 2 wds.
58. Rational
60. Mining extract

Friday's Crossword

Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Friday's Sudoku

4	9	5	7	2	1	8	6	3
1	2	3	8	6	5	7	9	4
8	6	7	4	3	9	1	5	2
7	5	1	3	4	6	9	2	8
2	3	4	9	1	8	5	7	6
6	8	9	5	7	2	3	4	1
5	4	2	1	9	3	6	8	7
9	1	6	2	8	7	4	3	5
3	7	8	6	5	4	2	1	9

Conceptis Sudoku

	5		8	9				
9	7		6		5	8		
			3				6	
7	9	3		5			1	
5								6
	2			3		9	5	7
	6				4			
		9	5		3		4	1
				1	7		8	

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